

**Farm Scientists should make Agriculture viable, profitable and sustainable: Vice President**

Vice President's Secretariat

**Farm Scientists should make Agriculture viable, profitable and sustainable: Vice President****A Happy Farmers makes a Happy Country:****Staying with farmers be made mandatory of Agri-Students;****Interacts with the Agricultural Researchers**

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The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu called upon Farm Scientists to focus on making agriculture viable, profitable and sustainable, besides ensuring home-grown food security to meet the needs of a burgeoning population. He was interacting with the Agricultural Researchers on 'Doubling Farm Income by 2022 in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana' at ICAR - Indian Institute of Rice Research, in Hyderabad today.

The Vice President posed several questions to the scientists and elicited their responses on how their research was translating to empower the farmers. Asking them to come out with innovative and out-of-box solutions to meet the challenges faced by farmers, the Vice President said "A happy farmer makes a happy country".

"We know the problems. What are the solutions, what are the new ideas...what is the way forward to take technology to the farmers" he asked. He pointed out that lack of quality seeds is one of the problems faced by farmers.

Similarly, another issue that needed attention was rising input costs. Crop diversification and promoting allied farming activities like backyard poultry were equally important to increase farmers' income. He also wanted the scientists to make e-NAM more popular with the farming community.

Stressing the need for home-grown food security, he said both productivity and production have to be increased as the country cannot depend on "imported food security". He said the Krishi Vigyan Kendras should become the hubs of activity for farmers.

Asking the scientists and researchers to spend "considerable time" with farmers to come out with practical solutions, he suggested that staying with farmers should be made mandatory for students pursuing agricultural courses.

Referring to agricultural credit, Shri Naidu emphasized the need for giving timely and affordable credit to the farmers at reasonable interest.

Observing that agriculture sector needs a great deal of attention because a majority of Indians still rely on agriculture and allied occupations in the rural areas for their livelihood, he said "We have a situation today where despite phenomenal increase in food production, farmers are not able to get

adequate returns from their investment. Agriculture remains an unattractive vocation to many families. We must change this situation”.

Asking agricultural scientists and managers come up with solutions that will impact the farmers’ lives positively and increase their incomes, the Vice-President said “We should focus on production and productivity to have adequate home grown food security. At the same time it is not merely increasing the production and per acre productivity alone which is important. It is also important for us to recognise that along with technology transfer and ‘intensification’ of agriculture, there must be strategic ‘diversification’ and attention to the key linkages in the eco-system. The farmers must be supported through market information, ware housing and cold storage facilities as well as the credit, marketing and insurance facilities”.

He said the most critical need is to establish a dialogue with farmers and provide them with knowledge and material resources to increase their incomes.

Following is the text of Vice President's address:

“I am happy to participate in today’s interaction with all of you and learn a little more about the excellent work being done by each of your institutions. Because of a number of initiatives taken by our scientists like you and the farming community, India’s food production has increased from a mere 50 million tonnes in 1950 to 275 million tonnes in 2017. As you have just now mentioned, India is the leading exporter of rice and contributes nearly 10% to our GDP. This spectacular achievement in the agriculture sector is in a large measure due to technology led improvements in agricultural productivity, investments in R&D and allied sectors and effective transfer of this technology to farmers over the last 7 decades.

I thought I should deepen my understanding and be aware of the state of the art and the current research being conducted by each one of you and see how the research findings are proving to be beneficial to the farmers.

Thank you for your detailed briefing on your activities.

I have always held that agriculture sector needs a great deal of attention because a majority of Indians still rely on agriculture and allied occupations in the rural areas for their livelihood.

We have a situation today where despite phenomenal increase in food production, farmers are not able to get adequate returns from their investment. Agriculture remains an unattractive vocation to many families. We must change this situation.

I am happy that each one of you is engaged in doing your best in your domain. I would urge each of you to think further on possible solutions to these challenge and as agricultural scientists and managers come up with solutions that will impact the farmers lives positively and increase their incomes.

We need to focus on increasing productivity and improve the rural, agro-based economy, especially the incomes of farmers.

We should focus on production and productivity to have adequate home grown food security. At the same time it is not merely increasing the production and per acre productivity alone which is important. It is also important for us to recognise that along with technology transfer and ‘intensification’ of agriculture, there must be strategic ‘diversification’ and attention to the key linkages in the eco-system. The farmers must be supported through market information, ware housing and cold storage facilities as well as the credit, marketing and insurance facilities.

I think that the most critical need is to establish a dialogue with farmers and provide them with knowledge and material resources to increase their incomes. I notice that you have been engaging in this dialogue and providing the required support services as well.

There is a need for educating the farmers on various possibilities to diversify not only in terms of alternative cropping patterns but also to give them facilities for taking up allied activities like dairy, fisheries, poultry and other allied occupations. Awareness about various cropping patterns based on soil profile and water availability in different agro-climatic zones is an important element in improving agriculture productivity.

I also feel that there is immense potential for value addition through agro based industries and food processing industries. Encouraging farmers to venture into these new areas of agro-based industries can be successful only if focus upon an important element. That element is effective transfer of knowledge and technology, transferring the 'know-how' and the 'do-how' from the lab to the land.

We should examine as to what extent we have been successful in conveying the vast knowledge base we have in our research institutions to the farmers. We should continue to innovate and search for more effective ways of transferring this knowledge to the farming community.

It would also be possibly beneficial if there is a two way dialogue between agriculture scientists and farmers so that the researchers not only understand the farmers' problems but also study any innovative practices which the farmers might have already taken up.

Of course in addition to knowledge and awareness, it is also important that timely adequate credit is available to all the farmers.

In addition, with the vagaries of nature impacting the agricultural sector, the farmers need to be given adequate financial protection through crop insurance.

I am aware that government has been taking up these issues very seriously and a number of measures have been taken up.

I am happy that all of you are actively engaged in not only advancing the frontiers of knowledge and have taken up very relevant research but are also taking up the challenge of communicating your research findings to the farming community.

I wish you all the best in your endeavours.

Jai Hind!"

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